THE VOICE

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Calendar:

Board Meetings

ASK Office–160 68th St. SW Grand Rapids, 49548 6:30 p.m.

- April 3, 2023
- May 1, 2023
- June 5, 2023

Family Events

Craft & Clay Day–4/15/23
Trip to Meijer Gardens– 5/27/23

Social Groups for Teens and Young Adults

- Drawing Workshop at Hearts for the Arts-4/24/23
- Walk to Sweet Rewards for Ice Cream—5/31/23
- Trip to John Ball Zoo—6/14/23

Full Spectrum Theater Group Performances

- 5/12/23
- 5/13/23

Parent/Caregiver Support Groups

- 4/18/23 (ABA Therapy)
- 5/16/23 (All Things School
- Related) • 6/20/23 (Dr. Kelsey Woolner, Phd, Pine Rest)

Walk for Autism-5/21/23

Golf Outing-7/28/83

Ride for Autism-9/9/23



NEWS FROM ASK

Happy Spring!

Spring means it's almost time for the *Walk for Autism*! Our Walk Day is really the best day of the year! It's so much fun to be together as a huge community, to share resources, to celebrate those we love who have autism, and to raise money for all the programs that we offer! We are so excited to go to the Ballpark! We will have the whole place to ourselves, too.

The best part of my job is being present at the programs and events that we offer. The Family Events, Social Groups, Support Groups, and our Clubhouse program are so rewarding. We see huge changes in those we serve. Lately, everything we do is drawing big crowds! Record numbers of people are coming to events and contacting us for resources and help. That is great news on one hand, but it is hard to turn away participants from programs that are full, like the Clubhouse Group, or to say that we don't yet offer something that a family needs, like a program for younger kids.

We know the needs of the autism community are great, and we are ready to meet those



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needs! Please join us at this year's *Walk for Autism*, so we can create more space in full programs, add new things like social programs for elementary age kids, and so we can continue to be here for families. As our largest fundraiser, this event really matters. Events like these are how we exist!



To participate in the *Walk for Autism* on May 21, bring in \$35 per person. That gets you a shirt and lunch, too! It's pretty easy to raise \$35 — just ask seven friends for \$5, or ask four family members for \$10, or ask three co-workers for \$15 each. You get the idea! Register on the walk site, so we can guarantee you a shirt.

We can't wait to see you at the Ballpark! Thanks for being part of the family of ASK!

Pam Liggett ASK Executive Director

We had the honor of being in attendance at the celebration of Gun Lake Casino's multi-year commitment to Special Olympics and the Inclusion Center. The center, where we house our office, is the reason we made it through the Covid years, the reason we can do so many programs, why we can offer a Theater Group, and, most importantly, it has given our people a place to call their own. Nothing pleases us more than when we hear that our people view ASK and the building as their second home. Thank you, Special Olympics Michigan Area 11 and Gun Lake Casino for your part in helping us serve our autism families!

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TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP: Drawing Workshop at Hearts for the Arts Studio Monday, April 24, 2023 6:00–8:00 pm

OUR TEEN AND YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP IS A GREAT TIME! JOIN US FOR FUN AND FRIENDSHIP!

This group is open to anyone ages 12 and up. A guardian must attend, too.

April's event is a Drawing Workshop at Hearts for the Arts Studio! We will learn techniques and complete a great project to take home.

Cost is \$25 per participant payable to the Studio. Parents don't need to pay. Snacks are included. Please RSVP to Pam at <u>PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com</u>



TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP: Walk to Sweet Rewards for Ice Cream! Wednesday, May 31, 2023 6:30–8:00 pm

OUR TEEN AND YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP IS A GREAT TIME! JOIN US FOR FUN AND FRIENDSHIP!

This group is open to anyone ages 12 and up. A guardian must attend, too.

May's event is a walk to Sweet Rewards to get ice cream and time to play outside games. ASK will pay for ice cream!

Please RSVP to Pam at <u>PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com</u>



TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP: Trip to John Ball Zoo Wednesday, June 14, 2023

1:00-3:30 pm

OUR TEEN AND YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP IS A GREAT TIME! JOIN US FOR FUN AND FRIENDSHIP!

This group is open to anyone ages 12 and up. A guardian must attend, too.

June's event is a trip to John Ball Zoo! We meet at the ticket counter and tour the zoo together.

Zoo admission is \$19 per person payable to the Zoo. Parents must pay too.

Please RSVP to Pam at <u>PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com</u>



Join us for a great day of togetherness, fun, games, crafts, resource sharing and a walk around the infield of the **LMCU Ballpark**. We will have the whole place to ourselves and enjoy lunch too!

THIS EVENT SERVES AS OUR BIGGEST FUNDRAISER OF THE YEAR, SO PLEASE HELP US CONTINUE TO FUND THE IMPORTANT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT WE OFFER.

To participate, each person is asked to raise \$35. Your \$35 gets you a Walk t-shirt, entrance info the event, and lunch at the ballpark. *You must register by May 8, 2023 to be guaranteed a t-shirt!* Click on this link for registration and more information: https://www.classy.org/campaign/2023-autism-support-of-kent-county-walk-for-autism/c476309

WE HAVE TONS OF AWESOME PRIZES FOR FUNDRAISERS!

- Raise \$50 and get an ASK water bottle!
- Raise \$100 and get an ASK water bottle AND an ASK bag!
- Raise \$200 and get an ASK water bottle AND an ASK bag AND a custom sign along the Walk Route!
- Raise \$500 and get an ASK water bottle AND an ASK bag AND a custom sign AND invites for 6 to a private movie showing!
- Raise \$1,000 and get an ASK water bottle AND an ASK bag AND a custom sign AND invites for 6 to a private movie showing AND invites for 10 to the VIP tent AND recognition on the jumbotron!

PRIZES FOR TOP TEAMS ARE PRETTY GREAT TOO!

- Top teams receive recognition on the jumbotron and custom sign with a picture!
- The top three teams can choose a party package for 10 people from one of three venues: Bowling at Spectrum Lanes, Amped Reality Virtual Reality or Roller Skating at Kentwood Fun Spot!

An on-line silent auction will be one of MANY awesome features of our biggest fundraiser of the year! We are currently taking donations of items to be showcased in the silent auction. Your contribution will help us get one step closer to our goal for the Walk event. Stay tuned for sneak-peeks at our amazing auction items soon! If you or your business would like to donate to our silent auction, please complete and mail in the attached form or contact Celia Andrus at <u>celia.andrus@gmail.com</u>

	ÅSK			
	2023 WALK FOR AUTISM EVENT			
	Donation Form			
• • • •	Date is Sunday, May 21 Location: LMCU Ballpark – Home of the West Michigan Whitecaps Expected attendance: 500+ people Resource Fair featuring autism-related businesses and services is included as part of the event Donated items are featured in Silent Auction or in drawings during the event Benefits of donating to our event include:			
СОМ	PANY NAME:			
CON	TACT NAME:			
CON	TACT PHONE:			
CON	TACT EMAIL:			
СОМ	IPANY ADDRESS:			
ITEM	I DONATED:			
VALU	JE OF DONATION:			
Autis P.O.	se mail form and item (gift certificates or monetary donations only please) to: m Support of Kent County (or ASK) Box 150348, Grand Rapids, MI 49515 <i>Fax to Celia Andrus at (810) 222-4892</i>			
	act Celia Andrus at 616-752-8577 or at celia.andrus@gmail.com with questions or to arrange up or mailing of your donated item.			
***T]	hank you for your donation! We are a 501c3 nonprofit organization, so your donation is tax- exempt and greatly appreciated! ***			

2023 WALK FOR AUTISM SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

EXCLUSIVE EVENT SPONSOR - \$2,000 - SOLD!

- Company name/logo featured on top and/or on front of t-shirts that are given to all participants
- Opportunity to welcome walkers from the podium
- Name/logo on ASK home page as Event Sponsor
- Name/logo on ASK Facebook page as Event Sponsor
- Company featured as a sponsor in all event publications
- Company featured as Event Sponsor in ASK newsletter (distribution of over 850 people)
- Jumbotron recognition of your company as Event Sponsor
- TWO signs recognizing your company as Event Sponsor along the walk route
- "Welcome" sign will have company logo as Event Sponsor
- Opportunity to pass out a coupon or promotional item to all attendees
- Resource Fair—If desired, your company will be given a prime location to showcase your business' commitment to the autism community. Offers you a unique opportunity to pass out information and talk to potential customers.
- EIGHT passes to the event + EIGHT event t-shirts

GOLD SPONSOR - \$1,000

- · Company name/logo featured on t-shirts that are given to all participants
- Name/logo on ASK home page as Gold Sponsor
- Name/logo on ASK Facebook page as Gold Sponsor
- Company featured as a sponsor in all event publications
- Company featured as Gold Sponsor in ASK newsletter (distribution of over 850 people)
- Jumbotron publicity of Gold Sponsorship
- TWO signs recognizing your company as Gold Sponsor along the walk route
- Resource Fair If desired, your company will be given a prime location to showcase your business' commitment to the autism community. Offers you a unique opportunity to pass out information and talk to potential customers.
- SIX passes to the event + SIX event t-shirts

SILVER SPONSOR - \$500

- Company name/logo featured on t-shirts that are given to all participants
- Name/logo on ASK home page as Silver Sponsor
- Name/logo on ASK Facebook page as Silver Sponsor
- Company featured as a sponsor in all event publications
- Company featured as Silver Sponsor in ASK newsletter (distribution of over 850 people)
- Jumbotron publicity of Silver Sponsorships
- ONE sign recognizing your company as Silver Sponsor along the walk route
- Resource Fair If desired, your company will be given a table in a prominent location to showcase your business' commitment to the autism community. Offers you a unique opportunity to pass out information and talk to potential customers.
- FOUR passes to the event + FOUR event t-shirts

BRONZE SPONSOR - \$300

- · Company name/logo featured on t-shirts that are given to all participants
- Name/logo on ASK home page as Bronze Sponsor
- Name/logo on ASK Facebook page as Bronze Sponsor
- Company featured as a sponsor in all event publications
- Company featured as Bronze Sponsor in ASK newsletter that has a distribution of over 850 people
- Jumbotron publicity of Bronze Sponsorship
- Resource Fair
 - If desired, your company will be given a table in a prominent location to showcase your business' commitment to the autism community.
 - Offers you a unique opportunity to pass out information and talk to potential customers.
- TWO passes to the event + TWO event t-shirts

WALK SIGN SPONSOR - \$200

• ONE sign with your company's name and logo that will be placed along the walk route.

JOIN US FOR TWO WONDERFUL PERFORMANCES OF THE "FULL SPECTRUM PLAYERS" THEATER GROUP!

Friday, May 12, 2023 7:00 — 9:00 pm

Saturday, May 13, 2023 2:00 — 4:00 pm



The 90-minute production includes short plays and talent acts and is suitable and fun for ALL ages.

This is designed to be friendly to any and all, so EVERYONE is welcome.

Our cast and crew is comprised of 19 actors on the autism spectrum, mentors, and back stage volunteers.

Tickets are \$5 at the door, and you can pick your seat!

This will be held in the auditorium of the Special Olympics Building, located at 160– 68th Street SW, Grand Rapids. It's between US131 and Division Avenue in an former school building.

Park in the WEST lot and enter via the gym doors.

For questions, contact Pam at 616-752-8577, or by email at: <u>PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com</u>



Heart of West Michigan United Way investors can choose to designate all or part of their annual contributions to Autism Support of Kent County. To designate your gift to ASK, use the United Way Designation Form and write: Autism Support of Kent County, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Parent/Caregiver Support Group All Things ABA Therapy Tuesday, April 18, 2023 7:00–8:30 pm

Join us for a presentation on ABA Therapy by two Board Certified Behavior Analysts from Rebound Home and Community Therapy. We will have plenty of time for questions too.

We will meet in our office at the new Special Olympics Center. The Center is located at 160– 68th Street SW, Grand Rapids, between US131 and Division Avenue. Park in the EAST lot, enter under the triangle roof, and head down the main hallway to our office, room #4.

Please RSVP to Pam at PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com



Parent/Caregiver Support Group All Things School-Related: IEPs, Special Ed Services, 504s, Etc. Tuesday, May 16, 2023

7:00–8:30 pm

How can you get the best school experience for your student?

Join Jen Amorose, ASK Board Member and Autism Teacher Consultant, for an informative discussion about everything related to autism and education. There will be lots of time for questions, too. This is open to anyone.

We will meet in the ASK office in the Special Olympics Center, at 160–68th Street SW, Grand Rapids. The Center is located on the south side of 68th Street between Division and US131. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the triangle roof. Head down the hall to the ASK office.

Please RSVP to Pam at PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com



Parent/Caregiver Support Group Advice from NeuroPsychologist Dr. Kelsey Woolner of Pine Rest Tuesday, June 20, 2023 7:00–8:30 pm

How can you get the best out of your child with autism? How can you increase independence, motivate them, and set them up for success?

Join Dr. Kelsey Woolner, PhD, from Pine Rest, as she will help us navigate the challenges of autism. There will be lots of time for questions, too. This is open to anyone.

We will meet in the ASK office in the Special Olympics Center, at 160–68th Street SW, Grand Rapids. The Center is located on the south side of 68th Street between Division and US131. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the triangle roof. Head down the hall to the ASK office.

Please RSVP to Pam at PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com



FAMILY EVENT Craft & Clay Day

Saturday, April 15, 2023 11:00 am — 1:00 pm

Join us for a fun day of crafting and making things with clay!

This Family Event is open to anyone with autism and their family. All ages welcome.

Cost is \$5 per family, and snacks are included. Please REGISTER by clicking on this link: https://www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org/n ew-products/4-15-23-craft-clay-day

The cart can be hard to find, so look in the corners of your screen. (You will receive an email confirmation that you have registered.)



FAMILY EVENT: Trip to Meijer Gardens

Saturday, May 27, 2023 11:00 — 1:00 pm

Join us for a trip to the beautiful Meijer Gardens! This is open to anyone with autism and their family.

We will gather by the front entrance and tour the Gardens as a group. If you'd like to stay longer or tour on your own, that's fine, too. Cost is \$5 per person,

Please REGISTER by clicking here: https://www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org/newproducts/5-27-23-trip-to-meijer-gardens

You will receive an email confirmation once you have paid. Please note that the cart can be hard to see. It may be in a corner of your screen.



Join us for some exercise, fun, and meeting new friends!

This is open to anyone ages 10 and up and their family who can safely complete a 60–90 minute walk. A guardian must attend. Please bring your own water!

You must RSVP to Pam at <u>PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com</u>. Please meet up at 15 minutes before the scheduled walk time as each hike will begin on time. If you are late, you may be left behind. For day of event emergencies, please text Pam at 616-822-0944.

The trails we hike will all be located in various areas of Kent County. We will meet at the actual trailhead to begin each hike. We'll plan on announcing a week in advance to firm up each respective hike, as they will be cancelled in bad weather. There will be a representative from ASK at each hike to lead the group.

The tentative schedule (pending weather conditions) is as follows:

April 22 - 10:00 am - Seidman Park May 17- 6:30 pm - Proven Trails June 3 - 10:00 am - Pickerel Lake July 8 - 10:00 am - Aman Park at Indian Trails Camp August 12 - 10:00 am - Cascade Peace Park

September 23 - 10:00 am - Crahen Valley

Hope to see you on the trail!



Conferences, Workshops, and Webinars

Michigan Alliance for Families On-Demand Free Webinar Series

A webinar is an online presentation you can attend without having to leave your home or office. It's an opportunity to hear an expert speak for about an hour on a topic that interests you. These webinars can be viewed at any time on the Michigan Alliance for Families YouTube Channel: <u>https://www.youtube.com/user/MichiganAlliance/videos</u> Online Learning Opportunities

https://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/upcomingevents/

Autism Alliance of Michigan List of Virtual and In-Person Community Events: <u>https://autismallianceofmichigan.org/events/</u>

22nd Annual START Conference (Focus: Inclusion) May 1, 2023 8:30 am - 3:30 pm Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center 219 S. Harrison Rd, East Lansing, MI 48824 https://www.gvsu.edu/autismcenter/start-conference-167.htm#registration

Autism Workshop for Caregivers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

May 2, 2023 3:00–5:00 p.m. Mary Free Bed (MFB) Professional Building Meijer Conference Center - Room B 350 Lafayette Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 Free parking is available in the attached ramp. **Speakers:** Dr. Robyn Weston, MFB Pediatric Psychologist, Pam Liggett, Executive Director of Autism Support of Kent County, Angela Hines, Aim to Inspire, Autism Alliance of Michigan (Virtual Speaker) and Attorney Sarah Kirkpatrick, Chalgian & Tripp Law Offices, LLC To register: https://tinyurl.com/4n3sfmmt

"Spellers": A Private Film Screening and Discussion for Autism Families and Providers

Sunday, May 7, 2023 3:15 pm Celebration Cinema South 1506 Eastport Drive SE, Grand Rapids 49508 Inspired by the book *Underestimated*, the new full-length documentary SPELLERS challenges conventional wisdom regarding a group relegated to society's margins: nonspeakers with autism, who most "experts" believe are cognitively disabled. Trailer:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3uDxbL69eg

(MAC) Annual Michigan Autism Conference October 12–13, 2023

This conference is geared to parents, educators, mental health professionals, and practitioners working with individuals with autism.

https://michiganautismconference.org/



Lights Up. Sound Down. Enjoy The Movie!

Showtimes - 11:00 am (It's always a good idea to check theater listings.).

https://www.celebrationcinema.com/eventsseries/detail/Sensory-Showtimes

Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves 4/8 The Super Mario Bros. Movie 4/15 The Little Mermaid 6/3

SENSORY-FRIENDLY MUSEUM NIGHT

Thursday, April 20th 5:30 pm — 7:30 pm Cost: Free for registered guests

In celebration of Autism Acceptance Month, the **Grand Rapids Public Museum** and **Hope Network** invite visitors affected by autism and other sensory processing needs to visit for a Sensory Friendly Museum Night.

The Museum will adapt sounds, lighting, and activities within the current exhibits to create a low-sensory experience for the evening. Additionally, visitors can experience a low sensory planetarium show in Chaffee Planetarium, ride the Spillman Carousel and explore the Museum's current exhibits, like the GRPM original exhibit: Fashion + Nature. Click here to register: https://www.grpm.org/events/sensory-friendlymuseum pight (2hilite=sensory)

museum-night/?hilite=sensory

Autism Support of Kent County (ASK) is on Facebook, so visit our page for updates on our programs and events. Don't forget to "like" our page to stay up to date on what's happening. Click <u>here</u> to visit us on Facebook.

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SOCIAL GROUPS

We currently offer three **Social Group Programs**. Email Pam, ASK Executive Director, at <u>PamLigget-tASKC@gmail.com</u> for more information on any of our groups. Pam can be reached by voice or text at 616-649-2665.

TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP

This group is run by Pam Liggett, ASK Executive Director. This group meets either monthly or twice each month for fun and friendship. It's open to anyone ages 12 and up.

Events are publicized on the EVENTS page, in our email blasts, and on Facebook. A guardian must accompany each individual to the events.

YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP—PUZZLE PARTNERS

This is a closed group that is ONLY for individuals with Level I autism and social challenges. Individuals must be at least age 18 to participate.

This group is run by Jennie Miller, ASK Social Programs Manager. Contact Jennie at <u>PuzzlePartner-</u><u>sYA@gmail.com</u>. This group meets 3 times each month for fun, friendship and support. To participate in this group, you must be verbal and able to communicate back and forth 3-4 times, be free from behaviors, and would be able to attend on your own. To be eligible to join, you must have a short phone call with the Group Leader, Jennie. Events are only publicized by an email from Jennie.

AUTISTIC ADULT MEET UP GROUP

This is a closed group that is ONLY for individuals with Level I autism and social challenges. This is a group for anyone with diagnosed or suspected autism who is over age 30.

This group is run by Ann Mary Dykstra, longtime ASK volunteer and group leader. Contact Ann Mary at <u>PuzzlePartners@gmail.com</u>.

To be eligible to join, you must have a short phone call with the Group Leader, Ann Mary. This group meets monthly for fun, friendship and support.

Events are publicized through emails from Ann Mary only.

ELEMENTARY AGE SOCIAL GROUP

Coming soon! Stay tuned. We are working hard to make this happen!



Are you an <u>adult with autism</u> <u>over age 30</u>, or do you know someone who fits that description?

If so, join us for support, resourcesharing, understanding, and friendship.

If you are interested, please contact Pam: PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com or by phone/text to 616-822-0944.

Are you interested in a Social Group for Elementary-Age Kiddos?

We are gathering interest regarding the start of a Social Group for kids with autism who are in elementary school. Dates and times TBD.

If you are interested, please contact Pam: <u>PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com</u> or by phone/text to 616-822-0944.

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CLUBHOUSE SOCIAL PROGRAM

Making Guacamole, Hummus and Salsa

Celebrating Birthdays

Creating Centerpieces for Art Gala Event

Yoga Workshop















Visit our website to view and/or download the ASK Community Resource Directory: <u>www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org</u>



Remember ASK in Your Estate Plan

We often receive gifts in memory of an individual who has been touched by autism. Thank you to these special families who think of ASK at such a sad time.

Please remember ASK in your estate plans, too. These gifts are treated with the utmost care and respect. Contact us for more information on how you can include ASK in your charitable giving plans at 616-752-8577.











TEEN/YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP

Bowling Party Roller Skating Party Amped Reality VR









Autism Support of Kent County (ASK) in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization of parents, school staff, and others who actively seek to support and advocate for persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families.

ASK is committed to partnering with local schools and agencies to promote the welfare of individuals with ASD in our community.

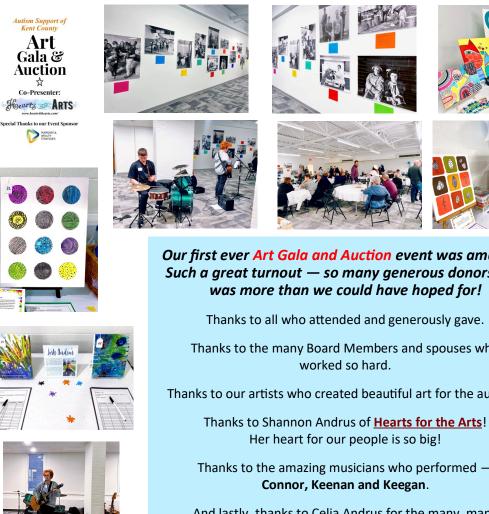
Please note that ASK does not endorse any specific therapy, product, treatment, strategy, opinion, service, or individual.

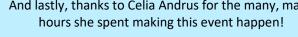
Disclaimers

Articles, conferences, workshops, presenters or information contained in this newsletter or at meetings are not endorsed by Autism Support of Kent County.

Articles occasionally offer information about medical/ pharmacological research, treatment and therapies or legal issues. This information is given for informational purposes and is not intended to act as a substitute for professional advice. Readers are encouraged to consult with their own practitioners for individual or specific advice.





























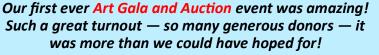












Thanks to all who attended and generously gave.

Thanks to the many Board Members and spouses who

Thanks to our artists who created beautiful art for the auction.

Thanks to the amazing musicians who performed -

And lastly, thanks to Celia Andrus for the many, many

We can't wait for next year!

















We had so much fun at our annual Easter Egg Hunt! Thanks to Jennie for planning such a great event and to Laura for bringing our actors to entertain us! Thanks to all who attended and volunteered. We love our autism community and families!





















Easter Egg Hunt





